MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 12, 1936.

The tenth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1936, was held in the office of Mr. John Russell Pope, 542 Fifth Avenue, New York City, on Friday, March 12, 1936. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Lawrie,
Mr. Savage,
Mr. Borie,
also H. P. Caemmerer,

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a. m.

1. PLANS FOR GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE EXTENSION: Mr. Moore brought to the attention of the Commission revised sketches received from Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect, with letter as follows:

February 25, 1936.

Chairman,
Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

There are being transmitted to you by special messenger, for comment and advice, three sets of sketches, one set showing the proposed H Street Annex, and the other two sets showing the Warehouse according to scheme "A" and "B", for the Government Printing Office, this city.

These two schemes differ only in the treatment of the pilasters which in one case have seven courses and the other case nine courses, making a corresponding difference in scale; and also in scheme "A" the channels of the pilasters are flat and narrow as against the chamfered character of the rustication in scheme "B".

The return of these sketches with your comments thereon will be very much appreciated.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) L. A. Simon,
Supervising Architect.

The Commission inspected the sketches. Mr. Moore said the Commission rejected the first plans presented because they showed a warehouse designed in the modern warehouse style for a location next to the City Post Office. The revised sketch was very much like the first one and the Commission considered it inappropriate to erect such a building adjacent to the City Post Office, which is a monumental granite building in the classical style of architecture. Mr. Moore called attention to the importance of North Capitol Street, which is one of the main thoroughfares of the city since it is on the axis of the Capitol Building. He said further that the City Post Office sets a standard for the type of building that should be built along North Capitol Street.

Mr. Moore asked Mr. Borie for his opinion about the matter. Mr. Borie said that about three years ago a contracting firm in Philadelphia asked his firm to make a design for the Government Printing Office extension and his office reproduced the existing Government Printing Office building for the new extension to H Street.

In regard to the present designs, Mr. Borie said that they are inadequate and that the new building should bear some relation to the City Post Office in its style of architecture.

The Secretary noted that at the meeting of the Commission held in January Mr. Simon was asked to submit not only a complete set of revised drawings, but also a restudy of the viaduct and the railroad connection.

The matter is to be considered further at the next meeting of the Commission in Washington. A report was sent to Mr. Simon. (Exhibit A)

2. COLONIAL SETTLERS MONUMENT: By Act of Congress approved February 12, 1936, the following legislation was enacted by Congress:

Public Resolution--No. 70--74th Congress
(H. J. Res. 307)
Joint Resolution

Authorizing the erection of a memorial to the early settlers whose land grants embrace the site of the Federal City.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to grant permission for the erection on public grounds of the United States in the city of Washington, other than those of the Capitol, the Library of Congress, and the White House, of a memorial of simple and artistic form and design to those early settlers whose land grants embrace the site of the Federal City, by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists, a corporation, one of whose objects is the erection of memorials to commemorate historic persons, sites, or events of the colonial period of this country, in the several States and the District of Columbia: Provided, That the site chosen and the design of the memorial shall have the approval of the National Commission of Fine Arts, and that the United States shall be put to no expense in or by the erection of the said memorial.

Approved, February 12, 1936.

Through the Secretary, Mr. Delos Smith, the architect, submitted a design with the following description:

The base is three feet square and two feet, six inches high. It supports a shaft four feet, six inches high by two feet square. The total height is seven feet.

The names of the early settlers are inscribed in the base, together with a small bronze tablet commemorating the presentation to the National Government by the N. S. D. A. C.

Four panels at the base of the shaft, symbolic of pioneer pursuits, represent: Tobacco, maize, the herring and the squirrel.

Mr. Moore said that sometime ago when the question of the location of the monument was brought to his attention he thought that a small marker like the Zero Milestone (about four feet high, located adjacent to the south side of the White House grounds) would not be objectionable in the Ellipse. This is where the National Society of the Daughters of the American Colonists want it. Mr. Moore said, however, that he did not like the design proposed for the monument and felt that a monument seven feet high would be inappropriate on

on the axis of the White House, particularly since now the Jefferson Memorial Commission is considering the erection of the Jefferson Memorial south of the Washington Monument.

Mr. Borie felt that the monument should be considered in relation to its location and that a plain shaft erected in an open space would be objectionable. He thought that if the monument would stand under some elm trees that might not be so bad. He cited the unfortunate way of selecting sites for monuments in the Fairmount Parkway, where committees have gone out and have taken the first site that seemed satisfactory to them. He again stated that the memorial should be carefully planned in relation to its location.

Other locations for the monument in the Ellipse were considered. Mr. Moore thought that the memorial might properly be placed opposite the D. A. R. Building. Mr. Lawrie thought it would be more appropriate to place it adjacent to the old gate-keeper's house at 17th Street and Constitution Avenue. Mr. Borie thought this a very good suggestion. The Commission decided to make a personal inspection of proposed sites at the next meeting.

Mr. Lawrie, who inspected the proposed design of the monument, considered its shape satisfactory. He also inspected designs for sculptural relief for the monument, by Carl Mose. The Secretary said that it is proposed to use buff limestone for the monument. The Commission believed that granite ought to be used.

(Mr. Moore had a talk with Mr. Smith about his design and also about the matter of location. A site on the axis of the Department of Commerce Building west of 15th Street has been selected, subject to the approval of the Commission.)

Further consideration is to be given to the matter at the next meeting of the Commission.

3. BRONZE TABLET FOR THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT: Mr. Moore reported that a few days ago he met with a committee representing the Washington Monument Society regarding the location of a large bronze tablet (about 6 by 4½ feet). This tablet was cast in 1888 and since then has been in storage in the warehouse of the Office of National Capital Parks. The tablet bears the names of many citizens who were prominent in the affairs of Washington at that time as also the names of founders of the Washington Monument Society. Mr. Moore said he had suggested to the committee that the tablet be placed in the pavement on the north side of the Washington Monument and that the committee considered this location satisfactory. Mr. Borie thought this location a very good suggestion. The Commission approved the location of the tablet as suggested.

4. WILSON AND KNAPP MEMORIAL TABLETS: The Secretary submitted photographs of the Wilson and Knapp Memorial Tablets, designed by Carl Mose, sculptor, to be placed in the arches across Independence Avenue to connect the Agriculture Department buildings. The photographs were inspected by Mr. Lawrie, who considered the letterin well done and the work good; and upon his recommendation the Commission approved them. (Exhibit B)

5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MALL: As this was the first meeting attended by Mr. Borie, Mr. Moore explained to him plans under way for development of the Mall. He said that Mr. Pope has been selected by Mr. Mellon to design the new art gallery, which is to be known as a National Gallery of Art, and that the squares along Constitution Avenue from Third to Seventh Streets are being considered for it. This would mean making other provision for the George Washington Memorial Building. The legislation enacted by Congress some years ago for a national gallery between Seventh and Ninth Streets along Constitution Avenue would have to be rescinded and the plans made by Mr. Platt for the loca-

tion would have to be abandoned. As to these plans Mr. Borie said that now museum authorities design museum buildings in an altogether different manner from the way they were designed when Mr. Platt made his preliminary sketches.

Mr. Moore said that a national portrait gallery is proposed by Senator Walsh along the Mall. The legislation for this building passed the Senate May 13, 1935. This building Mr. Moore thought might well be placed along Constitution Avenue between Twelfth and Fourteenth Streets. South of the Washington Monument plans are being considered for the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, designed by Mr. Pope. The memorial, according to Mr. Pope's design, would be somewhat like the scheme suggested by the McMillan Park Commission of 1901 for that location in that it is to take the form of a large circular memorial building.

Mr. Moore called attention to the scheme recently devised by Secretary Ickes for a square south of the new Interior Department building, which would do away with the Pan American Administration Building site at 19th Street and Constitution Avenue. Mr. Moore called attention to the group of white marble buildings that have been built along Constitution Avenue from Seventeenth Street west to the river and said that the Pan American Administration building is needed to complete the frame for the Lincoln Memorial. Mr. Borie said that Dr. Cret had told him he had prepared three sets of plans for this project. Mr. Borie thought it best to let the matter stand until it would be possible to carry out the scheme for the Pan American Administration Building on this site.

Mr. Borie complimented Mr. Moore on the success achieved in carrying out the Mall plans. Mr. Borie felt it is one of the greatest achievements in city planning he had ever seen and that the open vista from the Capitol to the Washington Monument is inspiring. Mr. Moore replied that it is L'Enfant's

plan that first proposed the Mall scheme and the Park Commission of 1901 reaffirmed it. Mr. Borie, however, gave Mr. Moore credit for 30 years of continuous effort to have the plan carried out.

Mr. Moore called attention to the assistance given by President Theodore Roosevelt in the development of the Mall when he championed the location of the Agriculture Department Building and ordered that it be built to conform to the Mall Plan. During the present administration President Franklin D. Roosevelt has also been interested in the Mall and has made almost a million dollars available out of Public Works funds for the completion of it, including the construction of walks and roadways, the planting of four rows of elm trees and the provision of lighting standards.

5. TRIANGLE NORTH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE BUILDING: During luncheon at the Century Club, Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke was present; he said he had been unavoidably prevented from attending the morning session. The Secretary brought to the attention of Mr. Clarke a landscape plan designed by Mr. Bennett for the triangle north of the Department of Commerce Building. Mr. Clarke disapproved this plan and recommended that until such time as it is definitely decided to place a memorial at this location the triangle should be planted with grass and bordered by trees. The matter is to have further attention at the next meeting of the Commission.

6. NEW CHAIN BRIDGE: Mr. Clarke was informed of the legislation adopted by the House of Representatives on March 6, 1936, in the pending District of Columbia appropriation bill for a new Chain Bridge, as follows:

> For replacement of the superstructure, and such portions of the substructure as may be necessary, including relocation and reconstruction of approach roads of the Chain Bridge in accordance

with plans and profiles to be approved by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, including personal services, engineering and incidental expenses, $250,000; and the Commissioners are authorized to enter into contract or contracts for the completion of said bridge at a cost not to exceed $350,000;

Mr. Clarke felt it would be a waste of money to spend $350,000 for the reconstruction of the old span as it would be inadequate and is improperly related to the necessary roadways on either bank of the river. Mr. Clarke urged that a high level bridge be built at the site agreed upon by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, that is, a location about a quarter mile above the old bridge. The new bridge would be about 1,250 feet long and would connect with the George Washington Memorial Parkway on both banks of the river. A four-lane bridge would cost $1,250,000. Mr. Moore had informed the Commission as to the project at the morning session and was decidedly of the opinion that this should be done. He said he would like to bring the matter to the attention of the Senate Committee on Appropriations and the Commission agreed that this be done. (Exhibit C; see also C-1)

7. MURAL PAINTINGS, ARCHIVES BUILDING: In the afternoon the Commission went to the studio of Barry Faulkner to inspect his mural paintings for the Archives Building. The Commission were delighted with the progress made by Mr. Faulkner since they had last seen his sketches. Mr. Faulkner showed the Commission his full sized renderings in color. Each of the paintings portrays 25 to 30 men who took a leading part in framing the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Mr. Faulkner said he had made careful study of each character and devoted much research work to each one so as to portray the figures as accurately as possible. Mr. Faulkner identified all of the figures in each painting. Mr. Pope and Mr. Kendall also accompanied the Commission and were likewise well pleased with the paintings.

The Commission complimented Mr. Faulkner on the success of his work. He said he has six months more work to do on the paintings, attending to details.

8. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION: Mr. Clarke said it would be impossible for him to be in Washington on March 20, and asked whether the meeting could be postponed a week. The Commission felt this could be satisfactorily arranged and decided that instead of meeting in Washington on Friday, March 20, they would meet there on Friday, March 27.

The Commission adjourned at 3:00 p. m.

COPY

March 16, 1936.

Dear Mr. Simon:

The Commission of Fine Arts after prolonged and careful study of the designs for the renovation and extension of the Government Printing Office and its activities have reached conclusions which the Commission trust will commend themselves to the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department.

First: North Capitol Street is one of the cardinal streets of the old city of Washington. When the growth of the city outgrew the L'Enfant boundaries North Capitol Street was blocked by cemeteries and buildings. In the 1890's Congress opened this street to the Soldier's Home, since which time it has had a good development. Logically and obviously the main monumental entrance to the Soldiers Home will be at the north ending of North Capitol Street. Congress evidently felt the importance of this thoroughfare when it provided for the extension of the City Post Office along North Capitol Street in the same monumental character as was carried out in the design of the original building.

The main building of the Government Printing Office, of red brick, was designed by Mr. Hill, a Washington architect of ability, training and taste, who so modified the prevailing architecture of his day as to create a design having as much of the element of permanence and harmony with Washington architecture as the limitations of materials, costs and bulk permitted. In essential features of design this building is not at marked variance with the City Post Office across the street.

It would seem obvious that in the extensions to and the rebuilding of a portion of the Government Printing Office, the newer parts should be in harmony with that portion of the older structure which is to be used.

The designs as submitted to this Commission show structures so unrelated to existing buildings as to give the impression that the designers have sought not for harmony but for difference.

This Commission, therefore, advises you that new designs be made, and that the architects be instructed to produce designs in which the importance and dignity of North Capitol Street be one fundamental consideration, and that the other be the harmony of the whole composition on both sides of North Capitol Street.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Hon. Louis A. Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department ,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT A

March 14, 1936

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on March 12, 1936, had under consideration the location of a bronze tablet cast in the '80's to mark the completion of the Washington Monument. It is understood that this tablet has been in a warehouse for several decades.

The Commission recommend that this tablet be placed on the pavement on the north side of the Washington Monument back of the row of benches. We have had a talk with the representatives of the Washington Monument Society, namely, Dr. Marvin, President of George Washington University, and the Secretary, Mr. Harr.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore

Chairman.

Hon. A. B. Caemmerer, Director,
National Park Service,
Interior Department,
Washington, D. C.

COPY

March 12, 1936.

Dear Mr. Mose:

The Commission of Fine Arts approve the Wilson and the Knapp memorial tablets, designed and modeled by you for the arches to connect the Agricultural Department buildings.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Carl Mose,

1517 H Street, N.W.,

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT B

COPY

March 16, 1936.

Dear Senator Copeland:

Thanks to your timely and effective intervention the Calvert Street Bridge has been constructed in permanent manner and has been designed so simply as to make it a lasting contribution to the architectural features of the National Capital.

Now comes the question of the Chain Bridge---whether $350,000 shall be spent in repairing the old structure, ugly and inadequate as a bridge and without adequate approaches at either end; or whether an entirely new bridge to cost about $1,250,000 shall be constructed at a high level, with four traffic lanes, and convenient approaches.

After studying this matter for several years in cooperation with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts has reached these conclusions:

The position of the Commission of Fine Arts in regard to the reconstruction of the Chain Bridge is quite clear and distinct.

First, the exact location of the bridge; and whether it should be a high or a low bridge, is a matter for determination by the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Second, inasmuch as the bridge will form an important connection between the two great parkways leading on either bank of the Potomac to Great Falls; and inasmuch also as it will serve as a traffic highway between Maryland and Virginia, the bridge should have no fewer than four traffic lanes, and should be architecturally a bridge befitting a park. The approaches should be adequate for traffic; and should have landscape treatment in keeping with the parkways.

Third, such being the treatment called for, it is unnecessary to do more than state the fact that the sum of $350,000 proposed for reconstruction is totally inadequate.

The present bridge is safe for loads of six tons. This Commission are convinced that economy as well as good taste would dictate postponing the whole matter until an adequate rather than a makeshift bridge can be built.

The National Capital Park and Planning Commission are creating a park and are developing streets and avenues in the area of the District bridge approach; and the Virginia territory is being rapidly and finely built up along the Palisades of the Potomac. So that postponement would seem to be an exercise of only ordinary prudence.

Would that prior to 1900 Senator McMillan could have seen the future and rapid development of Potomac Park and the cleaning out of the Virginia end of the old Long Bridge. Then he never would have sanctioned the Highway and the Railroad bridges built in such fashion that they have become eyesores. In the case of Chain Bridge it does not require much vision to appreciate the opportunity.

I am writing this as a personal letter for your own information and consideration.

With remembrances and regards,

Faithfully yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore

Hon. Royal S. Copeland,
United States Senate,
Washington, D.C.

P. S. I am inclosing a picture of one of the new bridges across the Cape Cod Canal which well represents the type of bridge that may well take the place of the Chain Bridge.

EXHIBIT C

COPY

United States Senate
Committee on Commerce

March 16, 1936.

Dear Brother Moore:

I have read with great interest your letter of March 16. As usual, I find myself in complete accord with your position. I shall see what I can do to be helpful.

With kind personal regards,

Cordially,

(Signed) Royal S.Copeland

Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman,
Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT C-1